

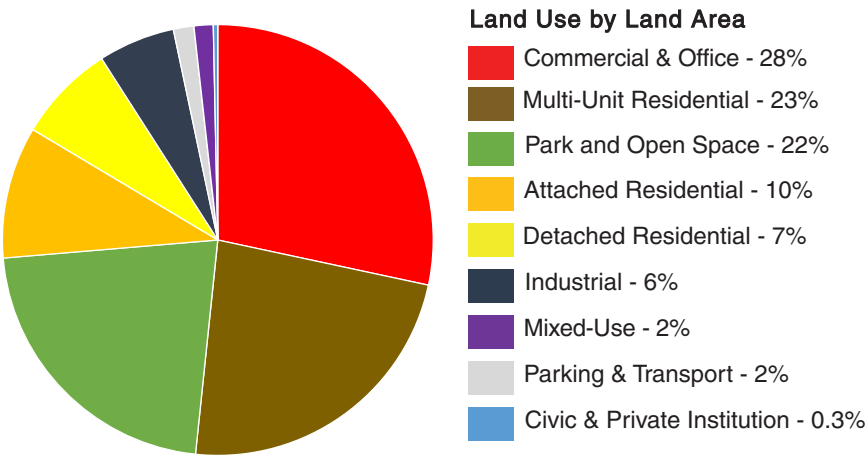


Planning Area 16

KING FARM AND SHADY GROVE

Planning Area 16 consists largely of the King Farm master planned community, with the remainder developed as suburban-style office buildings along Gaither Road, Piccard Drive, and Shady Grove Road; the Upper Rock apartments and retail stores; and a PEPCO Service Center. Residential communities located in the planning area include the attached and detached homes of the King Farm neighborhood, the Huntington at King Farm, Residences at King Farm, Bainbridge at Shady Grove, the The Flats at Shady Grove. Ingleside at King Farm is an independent living and assisted living facility located in the area. The planning area is shown in detail on Figure 73.

Existing Land Uses in Planning Area 16



Residential Dwelling Units	
Detached Residential	394
Attached Residential	972
Multi-unit Residential (apartment/condo)	2,850
Assisted Living/Nursing Home	650
Total units	4,866

Source: City of Rockville land records and GIS, 2019.

Area Characteristics

King Farm

The King Farm neighborhood contains single-unit detached homes, townhouses, apartments, a shopping center, and stand-alone office buildings all on a former 440-acre farm. The City annexed the farm property in 1995, approving its redevelopment as a neo-traditional neighborhood with a grid street pattern and a mixture of land uses and housing types. Construction began in early 2000 and parts of the original plan are still coming to fruition. King Farm was designed to accommodate multi-modal transportation with extensive sidewalks, bikeways, and a regional transit line (the Corridor Cities Transitway), all with connections to the Shady Grove Metro Station.

Preserved from the former King family farm, or “Irvington Farm,” the farmstead, and its associated two dairy barns, two tenant houses, and other ancillary buildings, are situated on property owned by the City that is designated as a local historic district and a City park. The City, with a priority for preservation, has stabilized or rebuilt several buildings on the site, though the long-term maintenance and use of the property remains in question. In August 2016, the Mayor and Council convened a community task force to determine the best possible future use for the site, though no final decisions had been made on the task force’s recommendations as of the date of this writing.

King Farm Village Center is the primary retail center for the neighborhood, with 120,000 square feet of commercial space, including a major grocery store. Approximately 760,000 square feet of office space and a hotel are located west of the main residential community near I-270. King Farm was originally planned for more than 3 million square feet of Class A office space in the Irvington Center section west of Gaither Road. However, some of the allocated office capacity has been converted to residential townhouses and senior housing (i.e., Ingleside’s senior living, assisted living, long-term care and rehabilitation services) due to changing market demand.

King Farm also contains active recreation parks and



Retail shops at King Farm Village Center

protected stream valleys, accessible to neighborhood residents and the community-at-large. Two of these parks, King Farm Park and Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park, are reservation sites for a future elementary school and a middle school, respectively, though neither are identified by Montgomery County Public Schools for construction in the near-term. Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park also includes the City's only official dog park.

Piccard Drive

The Piccard Drive office district is part of the I-270 High Technology Corridor, with visibility and accessibility to I-270 via the Shady Grove Road and West Montgomery Avenue interchanges. It is also accessible to I-370 and the ICC (Inter-County Connector) via Shady Grove Road and MD-355. The district was envisioned as a campus-like research and development office park, developed with minimum five-acre lots under the I-3 (Industrial Park) zone during the 1960s and 1970s. An updated Zoning Ordinance in 2009 applied the MXE (Mixed-Use Employment) zone to allow development of medium-density office and light industrial uses with a mix of commercial and residential land uses.

Other Areas

East of the offices fronting Piccard Drive, across a forested stream valley, are the office buildings of the Redland Technology Center, a gas station at Redland Boulevard and Gaither Road, and the PEPCO Service Center. The Redland Technology Center was built more recently than the offices of

Piccard Drive, first opening in 2009 with minor renovations in 2017, making it among the newest 'Class A' office space in the city.

In the northwest corner of Planning Area 16, along Shady Grove Road and the city's northern corporate limits, is Upper Rock, a mixed-use planned development with residential apartments, retail shops, and structured parking complementing existing offices. The development replaced a former research and development office park that had experienced declining occupancy and aging buildings. Another office park cluster adjacent to Upper Rock, is approved for mixed-use development, currently occupied by over 400,000 square feet of office space among seven buildings. Farther east on Shady Grove Road are two office buildings and a hotel.

Finally, the Rockville Corporate Center, at the northwest corner of MD-355 and West Gude Drive, includes two office buildings with a combined total of approximately 233,500 square feet. The Center is isolated from the rest of the planning area, with vehicle access from West Gude Drive and MD-355.

Transportation Infrastructure

The planning area is situated within a busy network of streets and highways. Congestion levels are high at the intersections of Shady Grove Road and MD-355, and of Gude Drive and MD-355, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. The intersection of Choke Cherry Road and Shady Grove Road is regularly listed as one of the top ten congested intersections in the county on Montgomery County government's Mobility Assessment Report.

In general, pedestrian and vehicular connections are well defined within the King Farm residential community, but are poor in other sections of the planning area. For instance, there are no good travel connections between Rockville Corporate Center and King Farm, and from West Gude Drive to and the Woodley Gardens and College Gardens neighborhoods. MD-355 is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists in this area. The lack of a grade-separated crossing of MD-355 to walk or cycle between King Farm and the Shady Grove Metro Station also inhibits safe and comfortable non-auto access to this regional rail station.

Planning History

The origin and make-up of the master planned King Farm community is described in the Area Characteristics, above. Except for a few remaining undeveloped parcels, build-out of the neighborhood is generally complete. The approved Comprehensive Planned Development for King Farm remains in effect today and any changes to the approved plan, and its subsequent amendments, require approval by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council.

There is no neighborhood plan for this planning area and none is recommended.

Key Issues

The following issues were identified during the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan effort:

- Need for better pedestrian connections to the Shady Grove Metro Station;
- Interest in the future use of the King Farm farmstead property;
- Reduction of traffic congestion on area arterials;
- Mitigation of alignment impacts from the future Corridor Cities Transitway;
- Concern by Piccard Drive business owners regarding the future of the regional suburban office market;
- Concern about the success of King Farm Village Center under pressure from retail competition in the surrounding area;
- The uncertain future of portions of Mattie J.T. Stepanek and King Farm parks that are reserved for new schools;
- Concern about current school overcrowding in the Gaithersburg and Richard Montgomery high school clusters and projected additional overcrowding due to new growth and development in each cluster;
- Desire to consolidate the King Farm neighborhood into the same high school cluster.

Focus Area Recommendations

These land use policies and zoning and urban design recommendations apply to specific sites in the Planning Area.

AREA 1 A1

1300 to 1396 Piccard Drive and Curie Court

This focus area primarily contains office buildings on 5-acre parcels, surrounded by dedicated parking lots with few amenities or open spaces.

Land Use Policy Map

The land use designation of OCRM (Office Commercial Residential Mix) anticipates a gradual redevelopment of existing office developments in order to reinvent Piccard Drive as a place to live, work, and play through improved walkability and neighborhood amenities.

Zoning Recommendation

Rezone these properties from MXE (Mixed-Use Employment) to MXCD (Mixed-Use Corridor District) to allow for a greater mix of land uses and community destinations.

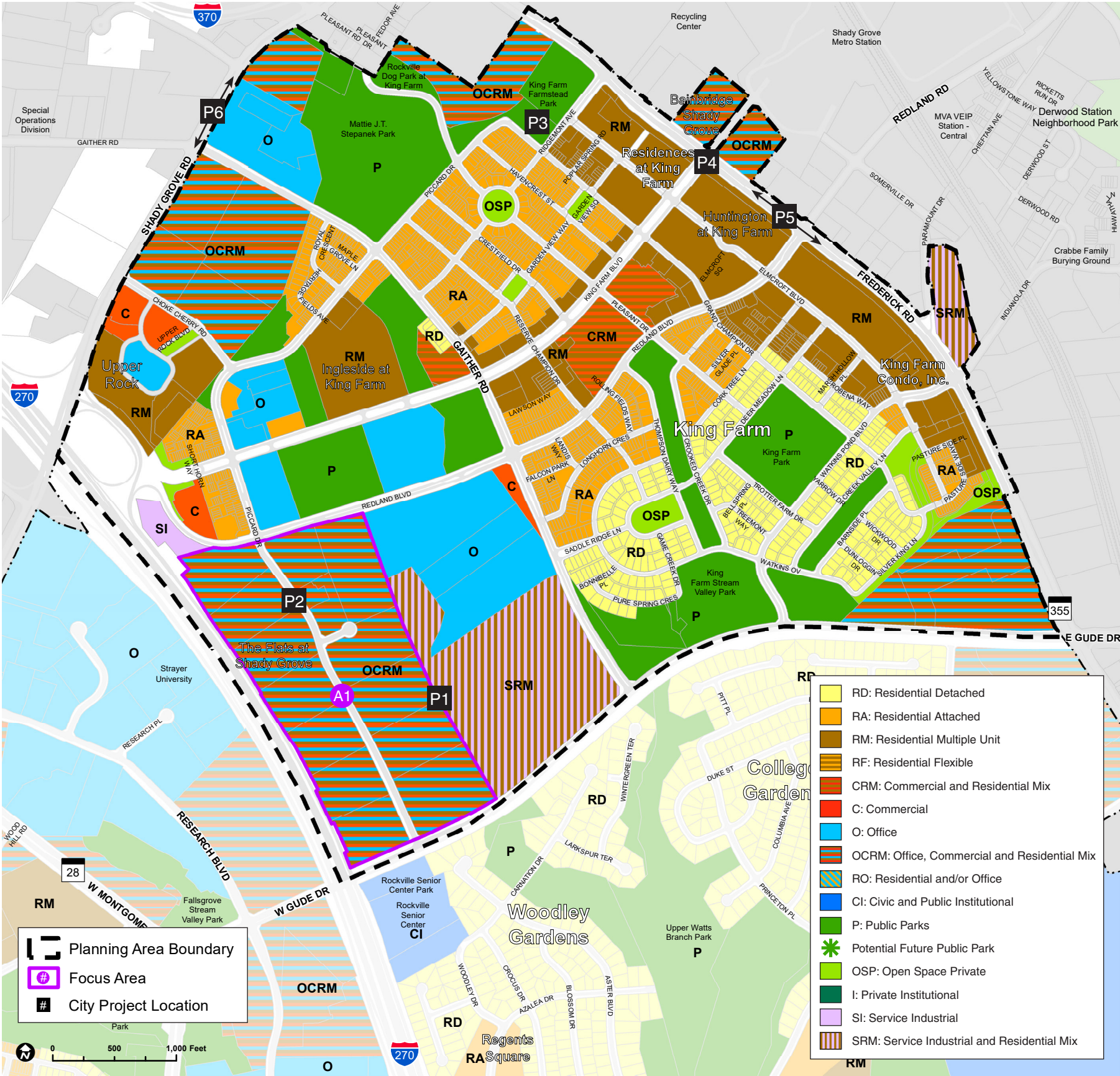
Urban Design Recommendations

Redevelopment projects in this area should incorporate street improvements, pedestrian connections, bus routes, and public spaces into their designs.



View looking north along Piccard Drive

Figure 73: Land Use Policy Map of Planning Area 16



Recommended City Projects

These projects or studies are recommended to be undertaken by the City in specific locations within the Planning Area.

PROJECT 1 P1

Seek opportunities to acquire land within the privately owned forested stream valley between Piccard Drive and Gaither Road, to incorporate into the City’s park system and connect to Upper Watts Branch Park to the south.

Expanding the network of open space to improve transportation connectivity for active non-vehicular travel modes (e.g., walking, biking, scooting, roller skating, etc.) is an important priority of this Plan. The plan also seeks to retain wooded areas and preserve and make accessible existing open space natural areas to serve as amenity space for existing and new communities.

PROJECT 2 P2

Improve the street character along Piccard Drive by incorporating complete streets principles as outlined in the Transportation Element.

PROJECT 3 P3

Find suitable uses for the King Farm Farmstead historic



Pedestrian crossing of MD-355 (Frederick Road) at King Farm Boulevard

property and buildings while retaining its original character and historic significance.

PROJECT 4 P4

Work with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to improve pedestrian and bicycle access between the Shady Grove Metro Station and the King Farm neighborhood, through at-grade improvements as well as a potential bridge or tunnel across Frederick Road (MD-355) at its intersection with King Farm Boulevard. *(See also Action 4.8 of the Transportation Element)*

PROJECT 5 P5

Work with Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration to conduct a special corridor study along MD-355 to determine congestion levels, recommend significant improvements to street design, increase non-auto driver mode share, and incorporate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). *(See also Action 19.7 of the Transportation Element)*

PROJECT 6 P6

Initiate a study of the Shady Grove Road corridor, in coordination with Montgomery County government and the City of Gaithersburg, through an agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding and/or cost-sharing agreement. The study should explore coordination of future development, mitigation of traffic congestion, improved placemaking, and enhanced safety and comfort for walking and rolling modes.

Other Policy Recommendations

The following additional items are recommended to address key issues and opportunities in the Planning Area.

Land Use & Urban Design

1. Seek opportunities for annexation of properties at and near the Shady Grove Metro Station, and at the corner of Shady Grove Road and MD-355. Offering increased development opportunities, as compared to Montgomery County government regulations, may

be appropriate. (See also Action 4.3 of the Municipal Growth Element)

- Support the annexation agreement and proposed residential development for the former King Buick properties on MD-355. New residential development in this area would be support to the King Farm Village Center.
- Reference the Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment, adopted by the County in April 2021, which includes recommendations for this area.

Transportation

2. Support the implementation of the Corridor Cities Transitway, on Shady Grove Road. (See also Action 9.3 of the Transportation Element)
3. Support a bus rapid transit (BRT) route along MD-355 (Frederick Road) with stations at Shady Grove Metro Station and near the intersection of Gude Drive and MD-355. (See also Action 9.2 of the Transportation Element)
4. Enhance the streetscape for people walking, rolling and biking along major roads in and around the planning area, with critical focus on improving safety along MD-355, to incorporate the principles of complete streets, as outlined in the Transportation Element, including wider sidewalks, bikeway facilities, such greenway features as linear parks, benches, and landscaping, and other active transportation amenities.
5. Explore participation in Montgomery County government's Shady Grove Transportation Demand Management (TDM) district, which would set a Non-Automotive Driver Mode Share (NADMS) goal for the King Farm and Shady Grove planning area.
6. Advocate for Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT SHA) and Montgomery County government to improve capacity, safety, and comfort for all modes at the intersection of MD-355 (Frederick Road) and Gude Drive, while accommodating a future bus rapid transit station. (See also Action 20.2 of the Transportation Element)
7. Advocate for MDOT SHA to investigate allowing a left-turn lane from westbound Redland Boulevard onto



King Farm Park, a public park and a potential future public elementary school

northbound MD-355 that ensures safe, comfortable, and efficient travel for all modes, including the potential for an all-stop red-phase or an exclusive left turn signal. (See also Action 20.8 of the Transportation Element)

8. Advocate for MDOT SHA to study intersection improvements at Choke Cherry Road and Shady Grove Road to reduce traffic congestion.
9. Explore opportunities to expand the King Farm Shuttle to the entire planning area in order to support existing and proposed residential and employment development.

Recreation and Parks

10. Ensure that any new development or redevelopment provides park space to meet the needs of existing and new residents, in accordance with the City's park proximity standard.

Public Schools

11. Advocate for and work with MCPS to determine the future plans for the two reserved school sites in the King Farm neighborhood at Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park and King Farm Park. If not used for a school, alternative school sites should be identified and the land retained as City parkland. (See also Action 15.1 of the Recreation and Parks Element)
12. Advocate for and work with MCPS to study adjusting high school cluster boundaries, including the future Crown Farm High School, to consolidate the entire King Farm community into a single high school cluster.